



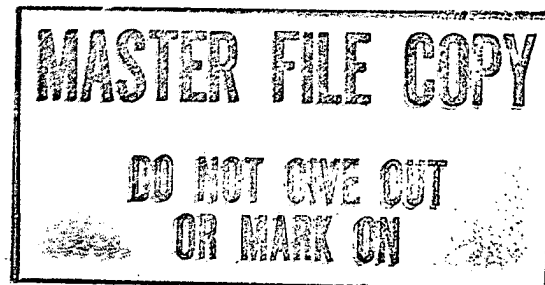
Director of
Central
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National Intelligence Council

NIC Threat Outlook



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NIC Threat Outlook

Recent intelligence reflected in this Outlook points up (1) Soviet political and military responses to the US Strategic Defense Initiative; (2) the likelihood that East European efforts to expand relations with the West will persist despite Soviet disfavor; (3) an unprecedented dismantling of some Soviet SS-20s amid continuing expansion of the USSR's ballistic missile forces; (4) the development of the first full-fledged Soviet-manned military "base" outside the Soviet Union; and (5) the prospect of significantly reduced warning time in Korea.

These developments affecting the strategic future are taking place within the context of, and despite, a leadership crisis of major proportions in Moscow.

1. Soviet Responses to SDI:

- We have recently received reports that the Soviets are reallocating funds and redirecting technology research efforts to develop counters to SDI and to improve their own defensive systems. The content of these reports and the manner in which we received them indicate they are part of a continuing campaign to generate opposition to the SDI in the United States:
 - One aspect of this campaign, spearheaded by Ye. P. Velikhov, has been aimed at undercutting the US SDI programs by claiming that they are technically unachievable. (Note that Velikhov is actually a major player in the Soviet high-energy laser weapons program.)
 - A second aspect claims that the Soviets are prepared to match US moves in SDI and are developing countermeasures that will make it fail.
 - A third aspect is a claim that the United States is upsetting the strategic balance and planning for a nuclear war-winning capability, and a threat that the Soviets will respond, including the implication that some day they will shoot down SDI space platforms.

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— These Soviet lines also employ what is becoming a favorite tactic: announcing Moscow's defense efforts, aspects of which have been under way for years, as if they were reluctantly begun in response to US programs:

- In fact, the Soviets have had a major effort to develop directed-energy technologies for many years. The high-priority Soviet program represents a massive long-term commitment of manpower and research and development assets.
- In particular, facilities for ground-based lasers have been under development [REDACTED] since the early 1970s. These facilities probably have ASAT capabilities, and one is likely to be used during the 1980s for testing of ballistic missile defense. The Soviets' present claim that they expect to complete a "huge" ground-based laser within three years may refer to one of these facilities.

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— The most unusual recent move in these respects was the passing of considerable, detailed "information" on Soviet anti-SDI

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- [REDACTED]
- As a result of the US SDI, the Soviets have reorganized science and technology funding for their own "space defense," and have increased that funding fivefold.
 - Soviet institutes have been asked to identify potential Soviet countermeasures against a US system, as well as technology programs to develop comparable systems. These efforts are to include matters of propagation; maneuvering and lift; and plasma, ion, proton, particle, lasers, or "anything else that was a directed source of heat 'except for nuclear.'"
 - The USSR "has developed" a countermeasure against any US "star wars" system. This could be done, [REDACTED] (1) via the know-how the USSR "now has, not yet implemented," to cut infrared signatures (missiles plumes) by 60 percent; or (2) by making a "very small nuclear explosion in space" that could "negate" any IR detection system the United States might have.
 - One of "the greatest technological problems" the USSR faces in creating any potential space defense system is optics: specifically the coatings, not the design or fabrication process.

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- The kinds of initiatives [redacted] reported [redacted] were probably selected for their plausibility, and contain enough detail to enhance the credibility of the reports.

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- Whatever the case, the Soviets have doubtless taken some steps to refocus technical efforts to begin to counter SDI. These steps probably represent relatively minor adjustments to ongoing basic technology and weapon concepts studies. As such, they probably do not entail major reallocations of resources. Such changes, however, could help the Soviets position their technology effort for some major new emphasis during the coming 12th Five-Year Plan (1986-90).

- It is highly unusual for the Soviets to provide *any* information on their defense effort, much less explicit programmatic details. This passing of information/disinformation reflects a deliberate official decision: [redacted]

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such information without authorization. The purposes of these moves are straightforward:

- At a minimum, Moscow clearly wishes to convey its serious intent to match any new US military capabilities in space, and to imply that the United States will not gain any net advantage from its efforts.
- Political disinformation is also clearly involved: to pass on data designed to play to different US audiences.

2. East European Efforts to Expand Relations With the West Likely To Persist Despite Soviet Disfavor:

- Moscow's success in getting Honecker and Zhivkov to postpone their trips to West Germany is not likely to end East European efforts to develop economic and political relations with the West.
- The motivations that drove the leaders to make their opening to the West are still there and are not going to go away:
- It is now widely realized in Eastern Europe that any hope for improved economic performance lies *not* in continuing to emulate the Soviet model or operating strictly within the confines of Comecon, but in loosening up the system so that it can interact and receive technological and—the East Europeans hope—financial support from Western countries.

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- The desire of at least some East European leaders to gain stature and national legitimacy as leaders in their own right and not strictly as agents of Moscow will also remain.
- It is significant that it took high-level personal Soviet intervention with both Honecker and Zhivkov to get them to postpone their trips. This underlines the difficulties Moscow has had in keeping East European states from deviating ever more from Soviet policy:
- This deviationism has been accentuated in the wake of the INF deployment. While Moscow wanted to proclaim and implement an Ice Age with the United States and West Germany, Romania, Hungary, East Germany, and Bulgaria refused to go along and maintained or further developed their ties to the West. Honecker and Zhivkov scheduled their trips to West Germany knowing that they would run against the grain of Soviet policy and maintained their plans to go despite growing criticism and hints in the Soviet press that the trips should be postponed. Finally, Moscow had to act at the highest level.
- Ten years ago simple hints from Moscow would probably have sufficed, and indeed GDR and Bulgarian leaders might not have planned trips at all. Now, it took a major effort on Moscow's part and willingness to bear the blame for worsening East-West relations to get the job done.
- Whatever Moscow does now with respect to Eastern Europe is strongly influenced by the struggle for succession to Chernenko and by the parallel struggle of Soviet institutional leaders to control policy in their respective fields. Soviet insistence on postponement of the Honecker and Zhivkov trips demonstrates Moscow's (and especially Gromyko's) determination to call the tune in East-West relations. These and other measures to tighten the leash on Eastern Europe, together with the removal of Marshal Ogarkov, also suggest the strong desire of the Soviet leadership to avoid possible distractions and challenges as another succession plays out.
- The reactions of political circles in West Germany to the postponement of the Honecker visit give the West grounds for concern:
- The Bonn government has tacitly accepted that it has suffered a setback but stated that the intra-German dialogue will continue and that it intends to follow that steadfast course. The

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SPD opposition, however, particularly its leftist elements represented by Willy Brandt and Karsten Voigt, have blamed Kohl for undermining *Ostpolitik* and are pushing for Western "reassurances" to Moscow such as declaring a moratorium on NATO-INF deployment.

- Kohl will not do this, but the Honecker-Kohl episode provides the East opportunities to try to soften up FRG attitudes, and could result in somewhat less cooperative FRG policies with the United States, at least for a while.

3. Some Unprecedented SS-20 Dismantlement, but Continued Major Expansion of the Soviets' Ballistic Missile Force:

— [redacted] that the Soviets have dismantled one of the five SS-20 bases [redacted] and that dismantlement of the other four bases there may occur soon. Dismantlement of operational SS-20 facilities is unprecedented.

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— At the same time, however, the SS-20 force elsewhere continues its major expansion, and the overall Soviet ballistic missile program continues its impressive quantitative and qualitative expansion. [redacted] dismantlement is intriguing, but not highly significant:

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- The Soviets have made and are continuing to make a very big investment in their mobile IRBM force; construction rates for new bases now match the peak historical rate of 1980.
- We expect the number of SS-20 launchers deployed at bases to grow [redacted] in the next several years, probably with about one refire missile for each SS-20 the Soviets deploy.
- The Soviets are also preparing to flight-test a follow-on to the SS-20 which is likely to replace most or all of the SS-20s, beginning in 1986-87.

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- Most important, we are observing a profound Soviet commitment to mobile strategic missiles, including additional SS-20s, SS-X-25 mobile ICBMs, and rail-mobile SS-X-24 ICBMs, as well as probably mobile GLCMs. Construction has already begun at [redacted] SS-X-25 bases [redacted]

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— We are uncertain as to why the Soviets are taking the dismantling action [redacted]

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- A likely explanation is that they plan to convert this division for use by their new SS-X-25 mobile ICBM, which should become operational next year.

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- Less likely possibilities are that preparations are under way for the eventual deployment of a follow-on to the SS-20, although the timing seems wrong, or that the dismantlement could be a temporary measure to carry out repairs or renovations at the bases.

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4. The First Soviet Overseas Military Base—At Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam:

- At present, the Soviets have nailed down at Cam Ranh* what is in fact the first true overseas Soviet base, even though Hanoi still strongly denies that the Soviets have any “bases” in Vietnam.
- Cam Ranh is now a unilateral Soviet base, complete with a Soviet naval infantry security detachment, and supported by [redacted] logistic facilities. This is the only such overseas Soviet operational military base in the world.
- Soviet naval strength in the area has averaged four submarines, two to three surface combatants, and 15 auxiliaries, on a rotational basis. A Bear maritime patrol contingent has grown to a composite squadron [redacted]. Starting in 1983 and continuing this year, a composite squadron of nine Badgers has arrived, [redacted] the only Soviet bombers based outside the USSR’s defense periphery. Recent [redacted] about 1,000 personnel.

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* It was at Cam Ranh Bay, incidentally, that the Russian fleet coaled in 1905 before its disastrous sea battle with the Japanese in the Tsushima Strait.

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— We do not know the purposes of these Soviet actions concerning Cam Ranh, or how these developments affect the Soviet-Vietnamese relationship. Certainly these actions are part of a gradual but far-reaching Soviet power-projection effort in the area, which furthers the purposes of:

- Encircling China.
- Backing up Vietnamese and Soviet influence in Southeast Asia.
- Matching US military presence and access in the area, specifically that out of Subic Bay.
- Putting Soviet forces astride Japan's routes to/from the Persian Gulf, and US routes to the Gulf.
- Enhancing the USSR's superpower image.

5. **Warning Time of North Korean Attack:**

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